

Electronic commerce, also known as [e-commerce](#), refers broadly to the buying and selling of goods or services using the internet. Far from being just for big business, many small businesses depend on or benefit from e-commerce. Website design for small business provides an overview of e-commerce for small business, along with key considerations for website design including defining a target audience, accessibility, mobile-friendly web design, payment processing, and content management.

E-Commerce Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on the global economy. Small businesses make up nearly half of the private workforce, the cost of sheltering-in-place has been felt across all sectors. As states gradually reopen, consumers have expressed concern and skepticism about the safety of public spaces. Accordingly, consumers transitioned much of their shopping to online platforms. Even before the pandemic, shoppers increasingly chose to shop online rather than brick-and-mortar locations in recent years, prioritizing convenience over physically viewing items. In fact, total online spending as of May hit \$146.47 billion, up 14.5% from the same period in the year prior, and this trend is expected to continue through the post-pandemic economy. While physical locations reopen, small businesses may find

opportunity leveraging e-commerce and digital operations to [adapt](#) to changing [consumer behavior](#) and social distancing rules.

According to a report by [Clutch](#), less than two-thirds (64%) of small businesses had a website in 2018, indicating that the online marketplace may be underutilized. In 2020, the pandemic [accelerated digital transformation](#) for many small businesses that previously relied solely on brick-and-mortar operations. E-commerce presents an opportunity to expand business operations and reach a wider audience but tapping into this channel requires an understanding of e-commerce fundamentals. To help facilitate this transition, let's dive into the top web design considerations for small business.

For additional guidance on website design for small businesses, check out the following resources:

- [10 Key Steps To Building A Great Small Business Website](#) - Forbes
- [12 Golden Rules of Small Business Website Design](#) - Business.com
- [6 Often Overlooked Small Business Website Basics](#) - SCORE
- [The Complete Guide to Building a Small Business Website](#) - Fit Small Business

Website Design: Know Your Audience

It all starts with your website. An effective website tailors design and processes to meet the needs and preferences of a well-defined target audience. While you may have your website in place, take some time to consider these questions:

- What is my site all about?
- What is the profile of my target audience? (age range, professions, hobbies, interests, etc.)
- Which adjectives best describe this target market? (youthful, fun-loving, rebellious, outdoorsy, homebodies, family-oriented, etc.)
- Who will actually come to my site?

- Will they understand the value proposition once they get there?
- What will compel them to linger on the site for any extended period?
- How would I like my site to appear differently, from a design standpoint, compared to my competitors?

Remember, your website is not designed for you – it must be designed for your prospects and customers! Look at your website from the perspective of the prospect. To ensure your website is easy to use for all potential customers, following [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) may allow your website to meet [design standards](#) for individuals with disabilities.

With mobile purchases becoming the [preferred choice](#) for online shoppers, both a mobile-friendly website and a mobile app are paths to gain new customers. Online and mobile technologies can be effective strategies to boost in-store sales and give customers more reason to shop in person long after the pandemic is abated. An [omni-channel retail strategy](#) can help link customers from website to store by making it easy for them to browse, buy, and [engage](#) on multiple channels.

Explore the following resources for additional insight on building an accessible, mobile-friendly website for your target audience:

- [A Beginner's Guide to ADA Website Accessibility Compliance](#) – Search Engine Journal
- [How Small Business Leaders Can Effectively Identify Their Target Market](#) – Captterra
- [5 Simple Ways to Pinpoint Your Brand's Target Audience](#) – Business.com
- [9 Ways You Can Make Your Website More Accessible](#) – Search Engine Journal
- [What Makes a Good Mobile Site](#) – Google Web Fundamentals
- [The Complete Guide to a Mobile Friendly Website](#) — Quicksprout

Website Design: Payment Processing

Payment processing is a critical component to starting an online shop. Setting up a secure payment page assures customers that their personal information is safe from potential cyber-attacks. Keeping proprietary and consumer information safe from breaches must be a constant priority for business owners. Up-to-date privacy policies and procedures can help consumers feel safe when shopping on your site. Further cybersecurity guidance for small businesses can be found [here](#).

Explore the following resources for payment processing features in your online shop:

- [5 Ways Your Business Can Accept Payments](#) - U.S Chamber of Commerce

- [The Best Payment Processing Companies for Small Businesses](#) - Fundera
- [Online Payment Services for Small Business Owners](#) - The Balance Small Business
- [The 6 Best Online Credit Card Processing Companies for Small Businesses](#) - Merchant Maverick

Website Design: Content Management

If you're new to web design, you may benefit from using a content management system (CMS) platform, which is software that assists in setting up your online store. Content management is a key component of web design as it allows you to customize site navigation, edit page content, and program additional features.

Some resources for finding the best platform for your business are provided below:

- [The 7 Best Ecommerce Platforms of 2020](#) - The Balance Small Business
- [Best E-Commerce Platforms for Small Business](#) - INC.com
- [Best and Most Popular CMS Platforms in 2020 \(Compared\)](#) - WP Beginner

- [Website Builder Comparison Chart](#) - Website Builder Expert

Overall, having a well-designed website will set your small business up for success in e-commerce. Be sure to visit our other related help topics on [Search Engine Optimization \(SEO\)](#) and [How to Sell Online](#) for information on other key considerations for small businesses seeking to establish or improve their web presence and customer engagement.

Additional Resources

Already in business or thinking about starting your own small business? Check out our various small business resources:

- View our COVID-19 Resources here: [COVID-19 Small Business Resources](#) and [COVID-19 Industry Resources](#)
- View small business help topics here: [Small Business Information Center](#)
- View business reports here: [Small Business Snapshots](#)
- View industry-specific research here: [Market Research Links](#)

Remember, you can also receive free professional business advice and free or low-cost

business training from your [local Small Business Development Center](#)!

If you have a small business resource you think should be included here, please [Contact Us](#).

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